

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Grandparent Caregivers Program:

Annual Status Report, CY2017

January 30, 2018



Child and Family Services Agency

D.C. Child and Family Services Agency

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Program Profile

This is the 11th annual report for the Grandparent Caregivers Program (GCP), established by the District of Columbia under the Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program Establishment Act of 2005 (D.C. Law 16–69; D.C. Official Code § 4–251.02 *et seq.*). The Fiscal Year 2010 Budget Support Act of 2009 moved the program out of pilot status, creating a permanent Grandparent Caregivers Program. Since the program’s inception in March 2006, the DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) serves as program administrator. The Establishment Act requires that the annual report includes recommendations for program improvement (page 9) and a specific set of statistics (page 16).

Program Profile

The Grandparent Caregivers Program provides a monthly subsidy for eligible low-income District residents raising their grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great nieces, or great nephews. Absent this subsidy, caregivers might lack the financial resources to care for the children resulting in entry into the foster care system. In calendar year (CY) 2017, the program served 868 children, with a monthly average total of 768 children (504 families) served.

	CY2015	CY2016	CY2017
Program funding ¹ (subsidy portion)	\$4.6M	\$4.8M ²	\$5.7M ³
New applications received (from families)	78	85	89
New subsidies awarded (to children)	92	127	138
Reapplications received (from existing families)	5	5	8
Reapplication subsidies awarded (to children)	5	9	13
Children receiving both GCP and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) at End of Year	553	556	661
Total number of children who received subsidy in the calendar year	785	855	868
Denials due to ineligibility	4	3	4
Denials due to funding (applications on the waiting list at End of Year)	0	0	0
Subsidies transferred to caregivers	1	2	1
Subsidies terminated by program or caregiver	70	133 ⁴	96 ⁵
Substantiated instances of fraud	0	2	0
Children removed from household while receiving subsidy	2	5 ⁶	1 ⁷

¹ Program funding dollar amounts are in millions.

² Number of children/youth receiving a subsidy increased. In response, District Council approved an increase to the GCP subsidy budget for FY2016. It aimed to increase family stability and child well-being.

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⁴ Reflects youth aging out, provider’s request to be removed, and providers who no longer qualified for the program.

⁵ Reflects youth aging out, provider’s request to be removed, and providers who no longer qualified for the program.

⁶ Reflects three families and five children who were removed in CY2016 while receiving the subsidy. CFSA removed three children for substantiated abuse/neglect and two because the caregiver was no longer willing to provide care.

⁷ One family and one child removed in CY2017 while receiving the subsidy. CFSA brought the child into care because the caregiver was no longer willing to provide care.

Chapter 2: Program Achievements

Achieved Performance Indicator

In 2012, CFSA established and the local child-serving community rallied around a strategic agenda known as the Four Pillars. It is a bold, strategic agenda to improve outcomes for children, youth, and families at every step of their involvement with the District's child welfare agency. Each pillar highlights a values-based foundation, a set of evidence-based strategies, and a series of specific outcomes and targets. The Four Pillars include: (1) Narrowing the Front Door, (2) Temporary Safe Haven, (3) Well Being, and (4) Exit to Permanence.

The Grandparent Caregivers Program is a valuable component of the Four Pillars strategy in that it provides families the support they need to prevent children from entering foster care as Table 2 shows.

Performance Indicator	2017 Actual	2017 Target
Children receiving GCP services will be diverted from entering out of home placement	99% ⁸	95%

Client Testimonials

The Grandparent Caregivers Program has made a significant impact in the lives of many District families. A number of program participants offered positive feedback this year expressing their gratitude for the program.

Since I've been in the program, I have been able to maintain housing, keep her properly dressed, and provide adequate food. I don't know what I would do without the program. – Grandmother of one child

I am very thankful for the Grandparent Caregivers Program. This program has been very helpful to my great-grandson and I. – Grandmother of one child

This program has been very helpful with paying for school uniforms, trips and food. We are appreciative for all the help we have received from this program.
– Grandmother of two children

The grandparent subsidy has helped me to be able to send my grandsons on trips. Provide them with clothes, shoes and transportation to and from school, sports activities and outings. Without the grandparents subsidy, I would not have been able to provide so much to my grandsons. – Grandmother of three children

⁸ Of the 868 children served in CY2017, CFSA removed one child when the caregiver was unable to continue providing care.

Chapter 3: Report

1) Applications Filed⁹

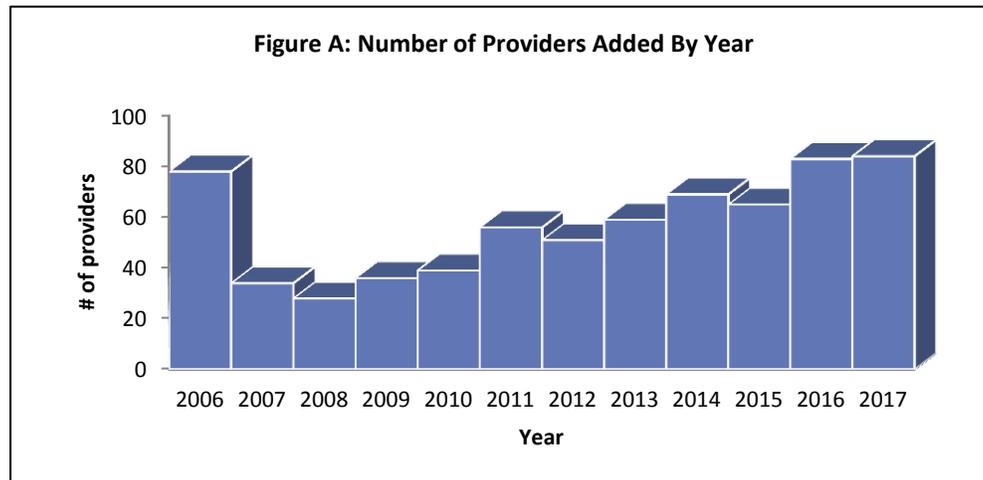
In 2017, the GCP received 89 new applications on behalf of 138 children. In addition, eight existing GCP participants applied to add 13 children to their subsidies, totaling 151 children in 2017.

2) Subsidies Awarded

Of the 89 new applications in 2017 (one application equals one family), CFSA approved 85, resulting in 125 new children enrolling in GCP. Including the 13 children added to existing subsidies in 2017, a total of 138 new children enrolled in GCP in 2017.

A full subsidy payment (without offsets¹⁰) is \$24.79 per day for children younger than age 12 and \$27.92 per day for children older than 12. During 2017, a participant in the GCP could expect to receive an average daily rate of \$19.83 per child or an average 30-day month rate of \$594.90 per child. This is consistent with the 2012 average rates and up from the 2011 average daily rate of \$14.96 per child or an average 30-day month rate of \$448.80 per child.¹¹ The current average number of children per family participating in the program is two, and the average age of children currently in the program is 10.

Figure A illustrates that 85 new providers/caregivers began receiving the GCP subsidy in 2017. This is the highest number of new applications awarded in a year since the creation of the GCP.



⁹ Potential applicants can receive an application by calling the program directly or downloading the application from the CFSA website (www.cfsa.dc.gov). CFSA has also provided application information to community partners so they can inform prospective caregivers about the program.

¹⁰ Caregivers not receiving other government subsidies for the child such as TANF and SSI benefits.

¹¹ The rate has remained the same since 2012.

3) Families Receiving the Subsidy, TANF, and SSI

Of the 868 children receiving a GCP subsidy in 2017, 661 (71%) also received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). This percentage is down six percent from the previous year. In addition, 45 children (5%) received Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which is also a decrease by one percent from the previous year. Under the Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program Establishment Act of 2005, the program offsets GCP subsidy amounts for these two groups of children by the amount they received in TANF or SSI. However, the 36 children (5%) who received Social Security survivor benefits from a deceased parent received a full GCP subsidy.

4) Denials Due to Ineligibility

CFSA deemed only four applications ineligible in 2017. Reasons included exceeding program income requirements, inability to verify the relationship between the prospective provider and child, and the child's parent residing in the home. None of these applicants requested a Fair Hearing.

5) Denials Due to Lack of Appropriated Funding

CFSA did not deny any applications due to lack of funding.

5a) Subsidies Transferred to a Relative Caregiver

On occasion, a caregiver becomes unable to provide appropriate care to a child(ren) due to death or failing mental and/or physical health. Under the Grandparent Caregivers Program Relative Subsidy Transfer Amendment Act of 2015 (*D.C. Law 21-40; D.C. Official Code § 4-251.03a*), CFSA may transfer a subsidy from an eligible caregiver to another relative who does not meet the initial Grandparent Caregiver requirements but is willing to care for the child(ren). This change allows children to remain safely in the care of relatives and mitigates their risk of entry into foster care. In 2017, CFSA transferred one subsidy due to the failing health of a caregiver.

6) Estimated Eligible Caretakers and Estimated Grandparents Acting as Caregivers¹²

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Kids Count Data Center, in 2015, 8,000 District children younger than age 18 were living in grandparent-led households and an additional 5,000 were living in households led by a relative caregiver. Compared to children in non-relative care, they have more stability and are more likely to maintain connections with siblings, preserve their cultural heritage, and maintain community bonds.¹³

¹² This information is reflective of the Annual Grand families Report by Generation United, which has not been updated for 2016.

¹³ "Time for Reform: Support Relatives in Providing Foster Care and Permanent Families for Children." Kids Are Waiting: Fix Foster Care Now and Generations United, Washington, DC. 2007 and Conway, Tiffany and Rutledge Q. Hudson. "Is Kinship Care Good for Kids?" Center for Law and Social Policy, Washington, DC. 2007.

6a) Demographics

Figure B shows families participating in the GCP have four primary caregiver types: grandmothers, grandfathers, great aunts, and great uncles. The majority of heads of household are grandmothers at 462 (89%).

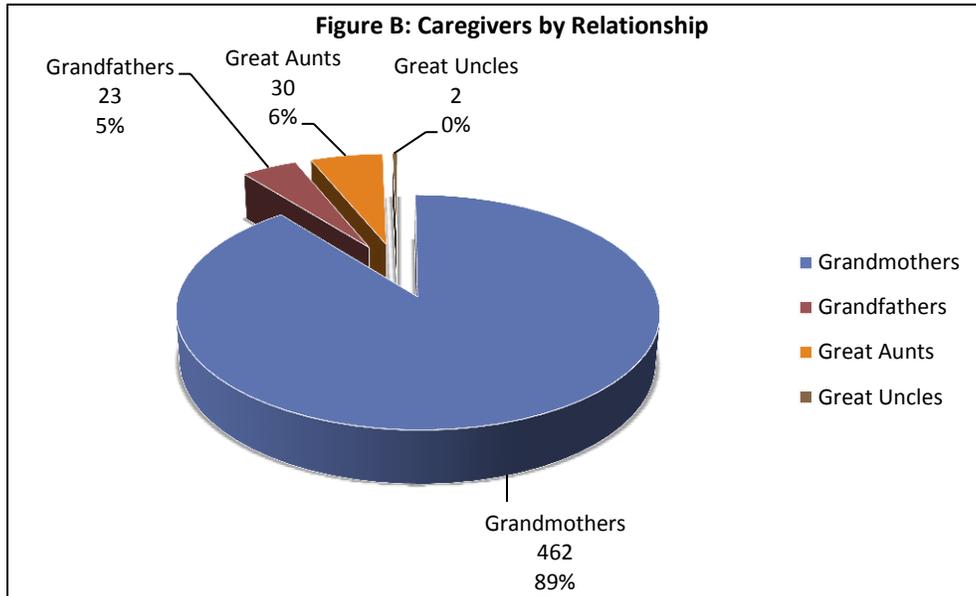


Figure C shows that currently, Wards 7 and 8 represent the largest percentage of families participating in the Grandparent Caregivers Program. Ward 7 is home to 163 families (31%) while Ward 8 has 207 families (40%). The total number of caregivers across all Wards is 517.

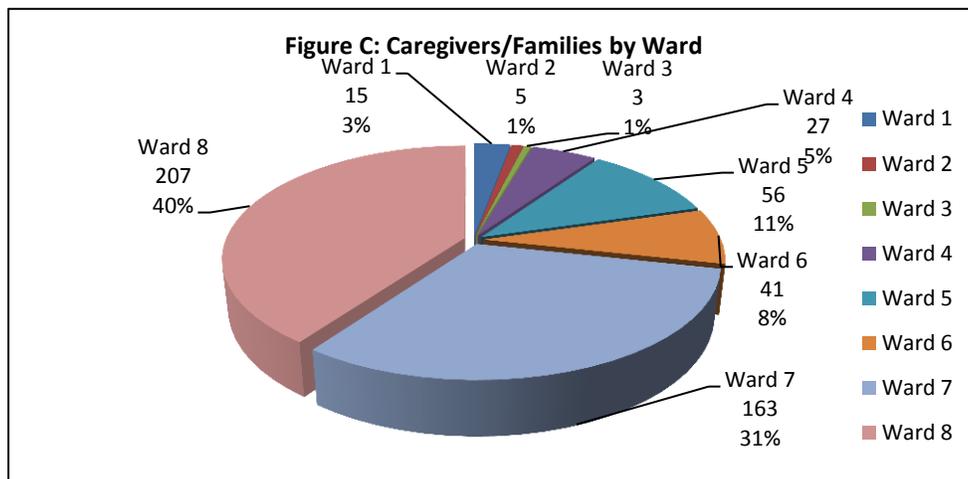
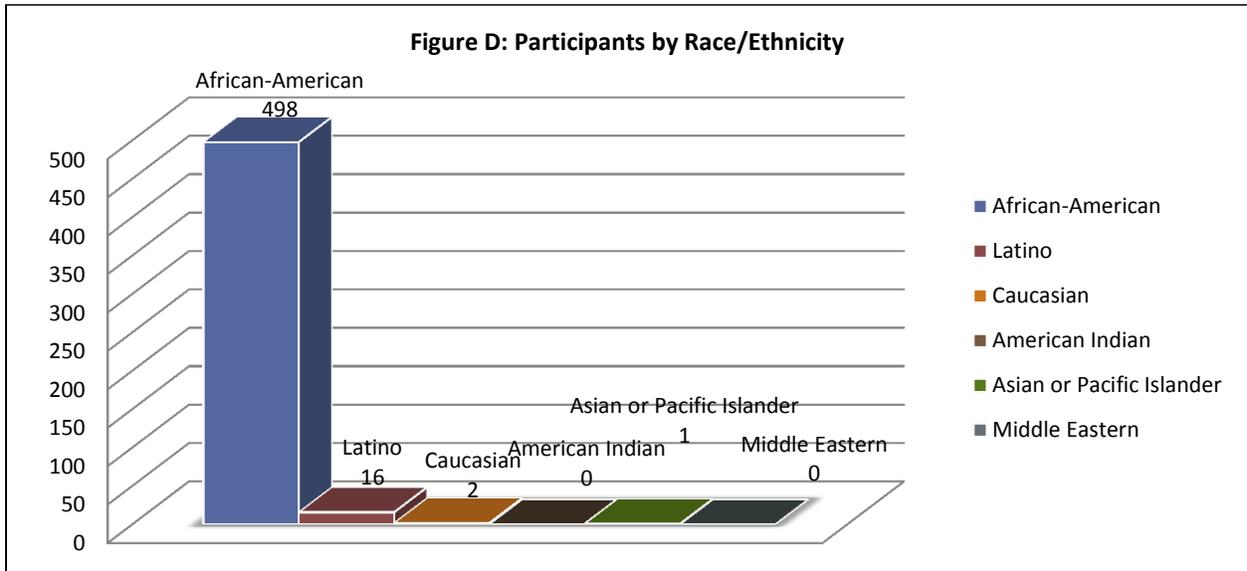
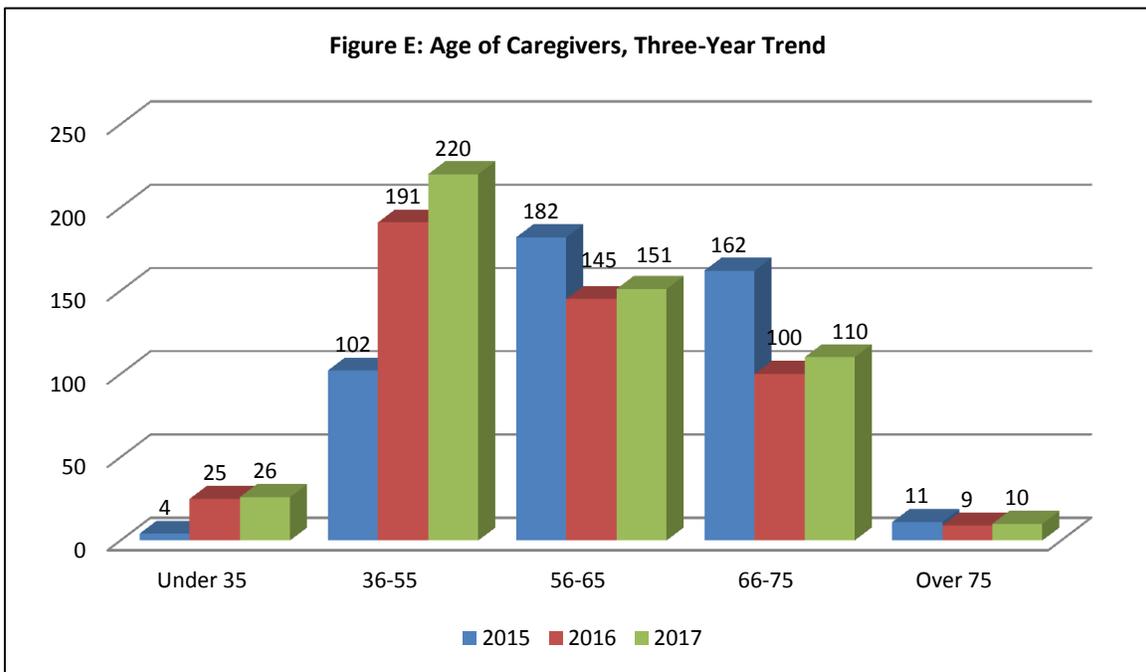


Figure D shows the majority of households in the Grandparent Caregivers Program are African-American families with a much smaller percentage of Latino and Caucasian families.



Caregivers in the program vary significantly in age. Figure E shows the majority of the caregivers are age 65 and under. A total of 48 percent of caregivers are 55 years old and younger. The median age of caregivers in the Grandparent Caregivers Program for 2017 was 47. This was consistent with the median age range for CY2016. This could be attributed to the increase in caregivers between ages 36-55 in 2017.



7) Terminations and Aging Out

Termination statistics are based on individual children, as the circumstances of one child may change and result in termination without affecting other children in the household. Of the 96 children who exited the program during 2017, 44 exited due to reaching age 18. CFSA stopped subsidies to the remaining 52 children for one of the following reasons:

- Death of caregiver.¹⁴
- Another person assumed care and did not reside in the District.
- Caregiver failed to recertify.
- CFSA removed child as part of an abuse/neglect investigation and substantiation.
- The caregiver's household income increased, exceeding eligibility requirements.
- Birth parent moved back into the home and the family did not qualify for an exception as outlined in the District of Columbia Code.

In 2017, no Fair Hearing appeal requests were submitted due to termination of a subsidy.

8) Substantiated Instances of Fraud

In 2017, there were no instances of fraud.

9) Children Removed from Households while Receiving Subsidy

Of the 868 children served in 2017, CFSA removed only one child. The child was removed due to the grandmother's failing health and hospitalization. CFSA's Child Protective Services investigates all cases involving removals.

10) Recommendations for Program Improvement

Program Survey

At the end of November 2016, CFSA mailed surveys to caregivers in the program. Thirty-six percent responded. Following are the results of the survey.

¹⁴The death of the caregiver resulted in two children relocating out of the District to live with relatives.

Figure F shows the number of children a caregiver is receiving subsidy for, represented by four primary caregiver types: one, two, three and four or more. The majority of caregivers are receiving subsidy for two or three children.

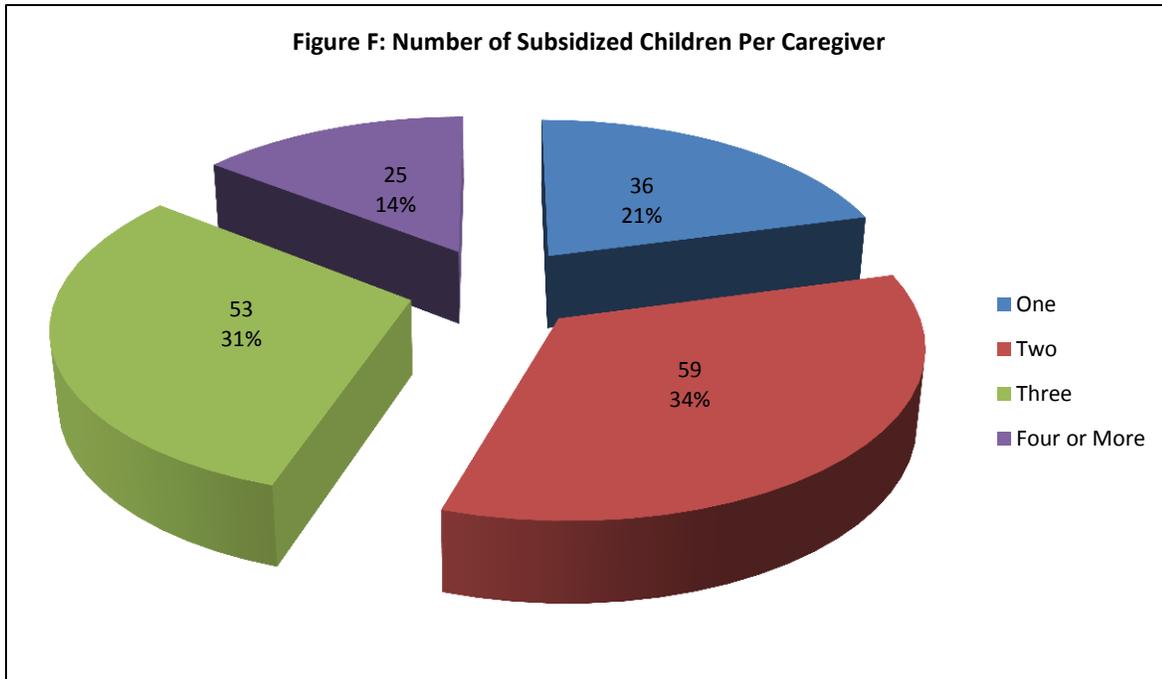


Figure G shows that a majority of caregivers started providing care when the children were of school age.

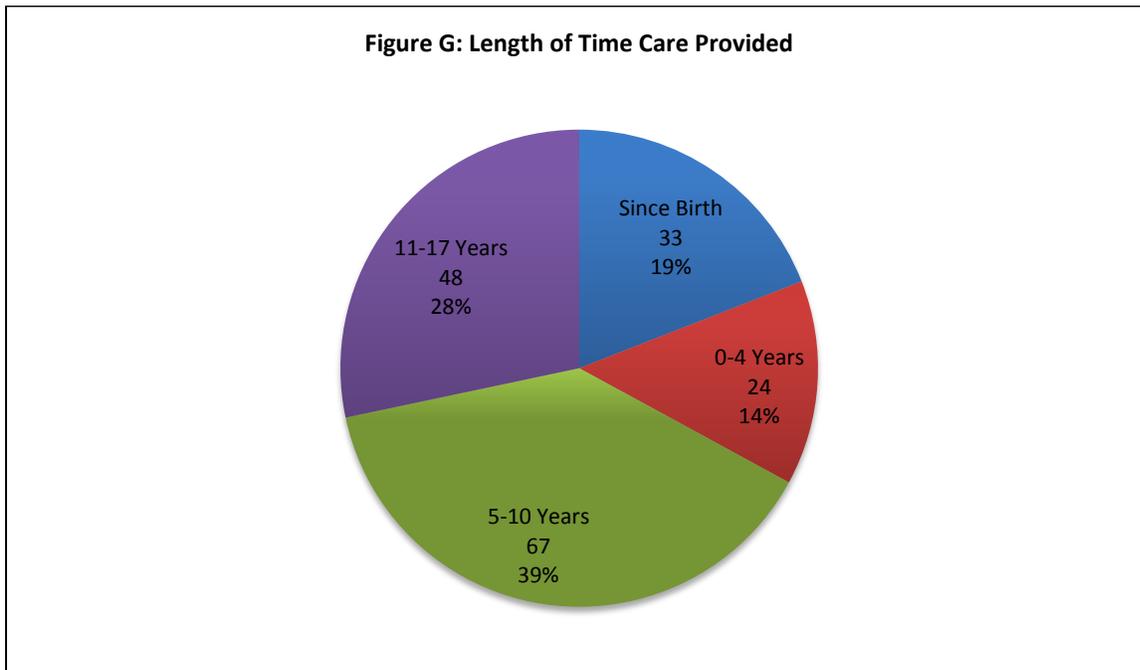
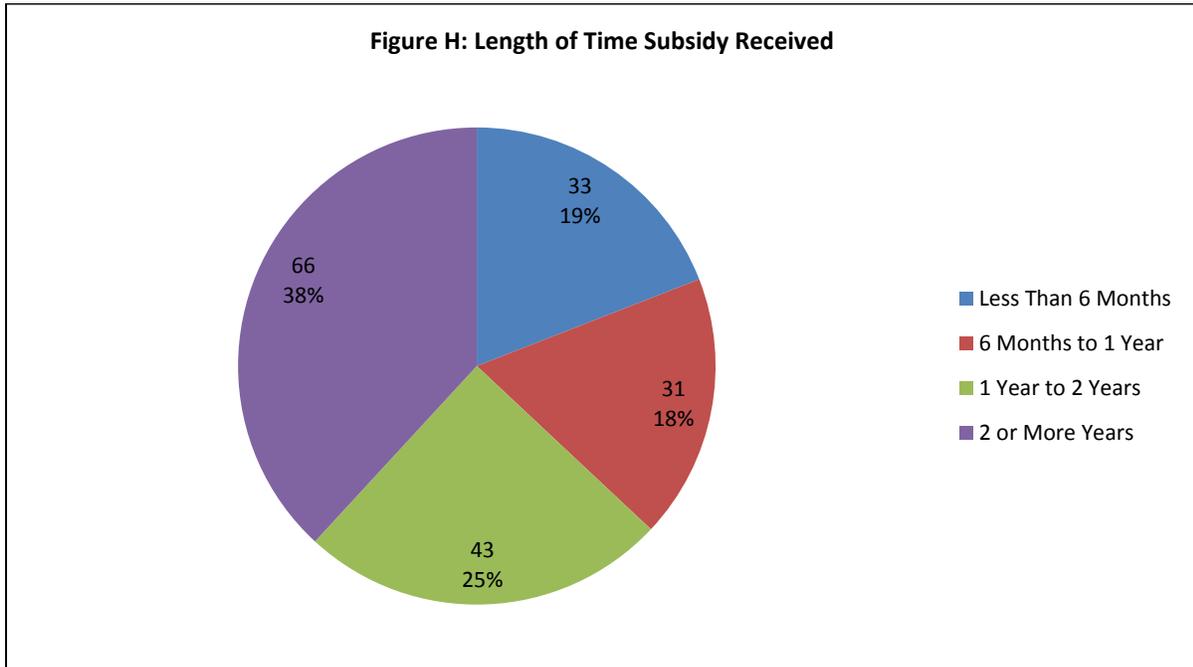


Figure H shows that 38 percent of caregivers who participated in the 2017 survey have been receiving a subsidy for two or more years.



As shown in Figures I and J, the primary reason children are not with their parents is that the parent is unwilling to care for them, and 45 percent of parents do not have contact with their children.

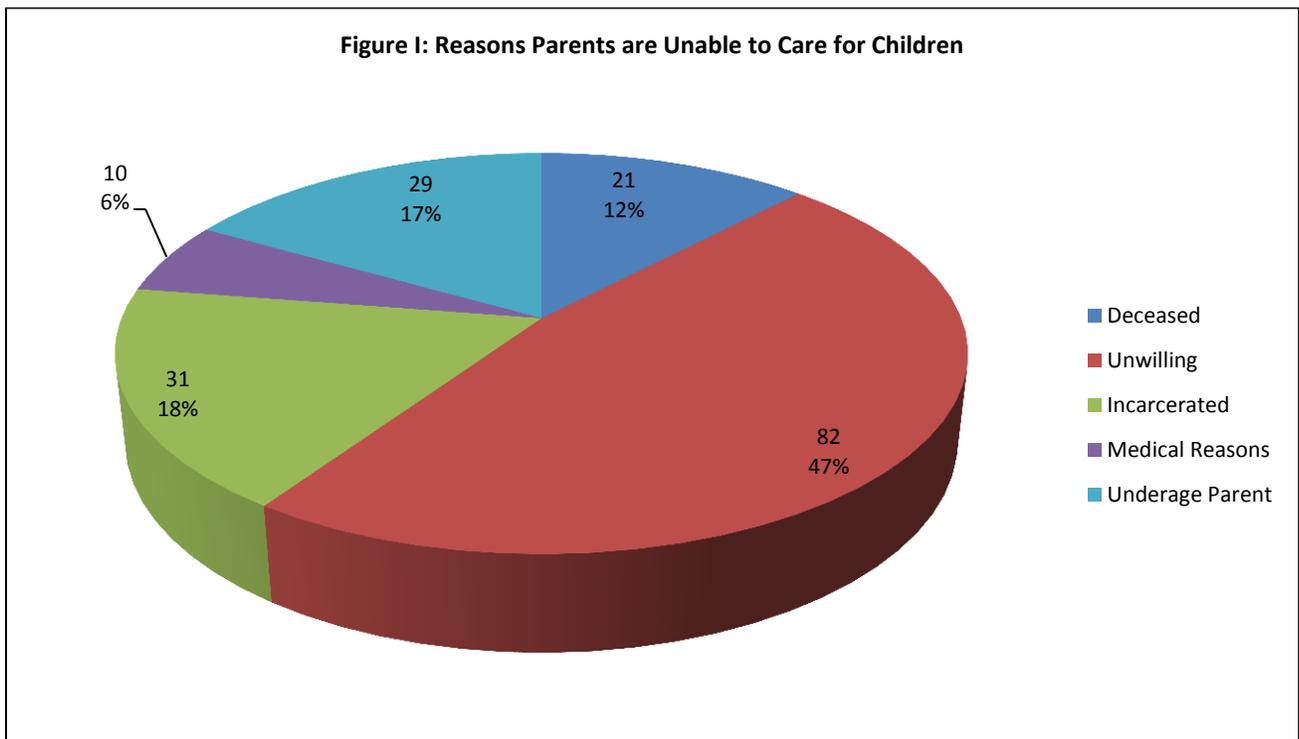
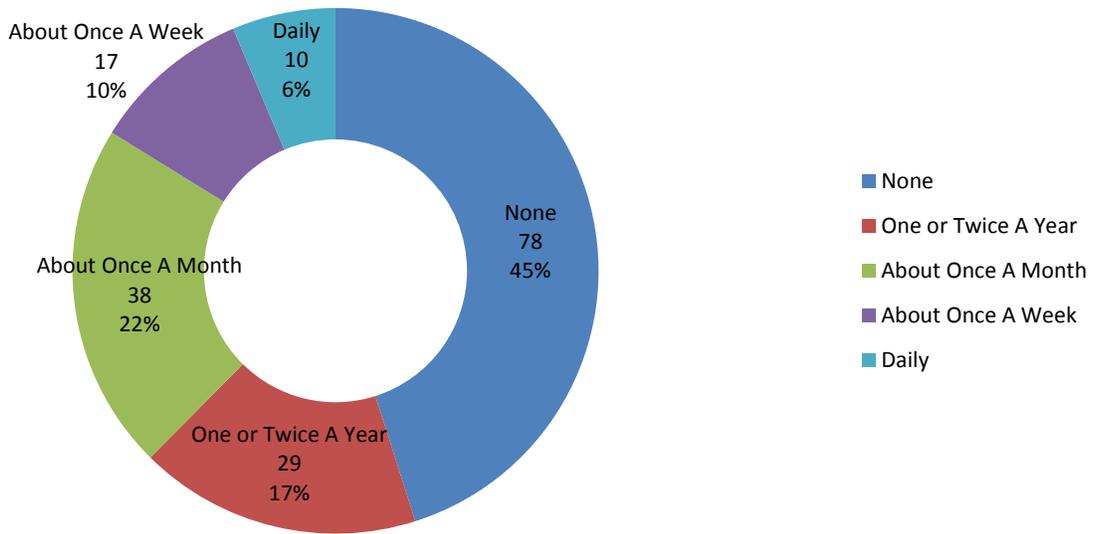
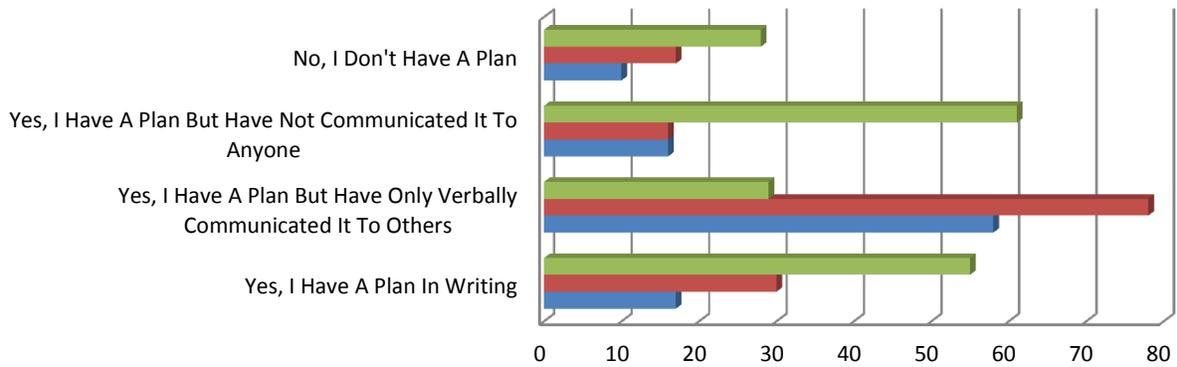


Figure J: Frequency of Birth Parent Contact with Child(ren)



Since the Grandparent Caregivers Program Relative Subsidy Transfer Amendment Act of 2015, applicants are asked, during the application process, to identify and provide contact information for an eligible relative in the event they are no longer able to provide care. As a result, Figure K shows an increase in written plans.

Figure K: Contingency Plan for Children



	Yes, I Have A Plan In Writing	Yes, I Have A Plan But Have Only Verbally Communicated It To Others	Yes, I Have A Plan But Have Not Communicated It To Anyone	No, I Don't Have A Plan
2017	55	29	61	28
2011	30	78	16	17
2008	17	58	16	10

Figure L indicates a majority of caregivers have identified a local relative to continue care in their absence.

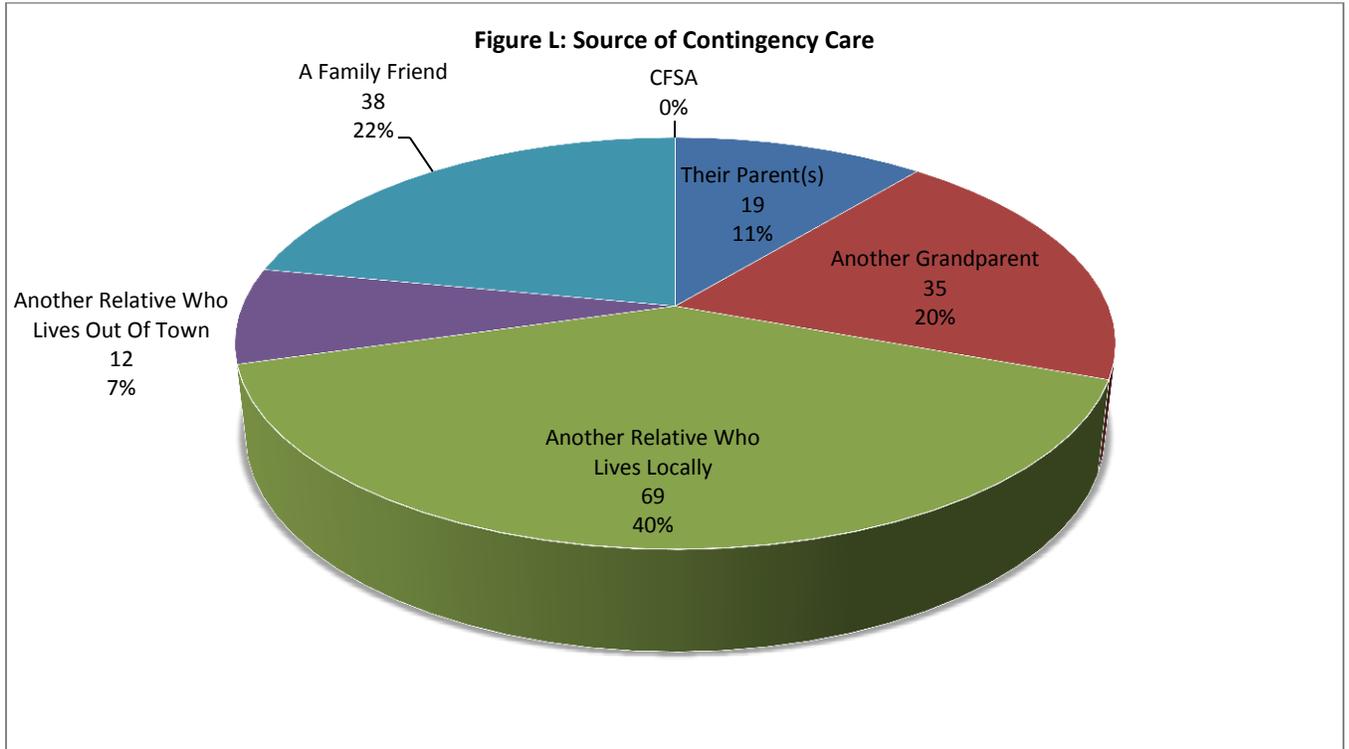
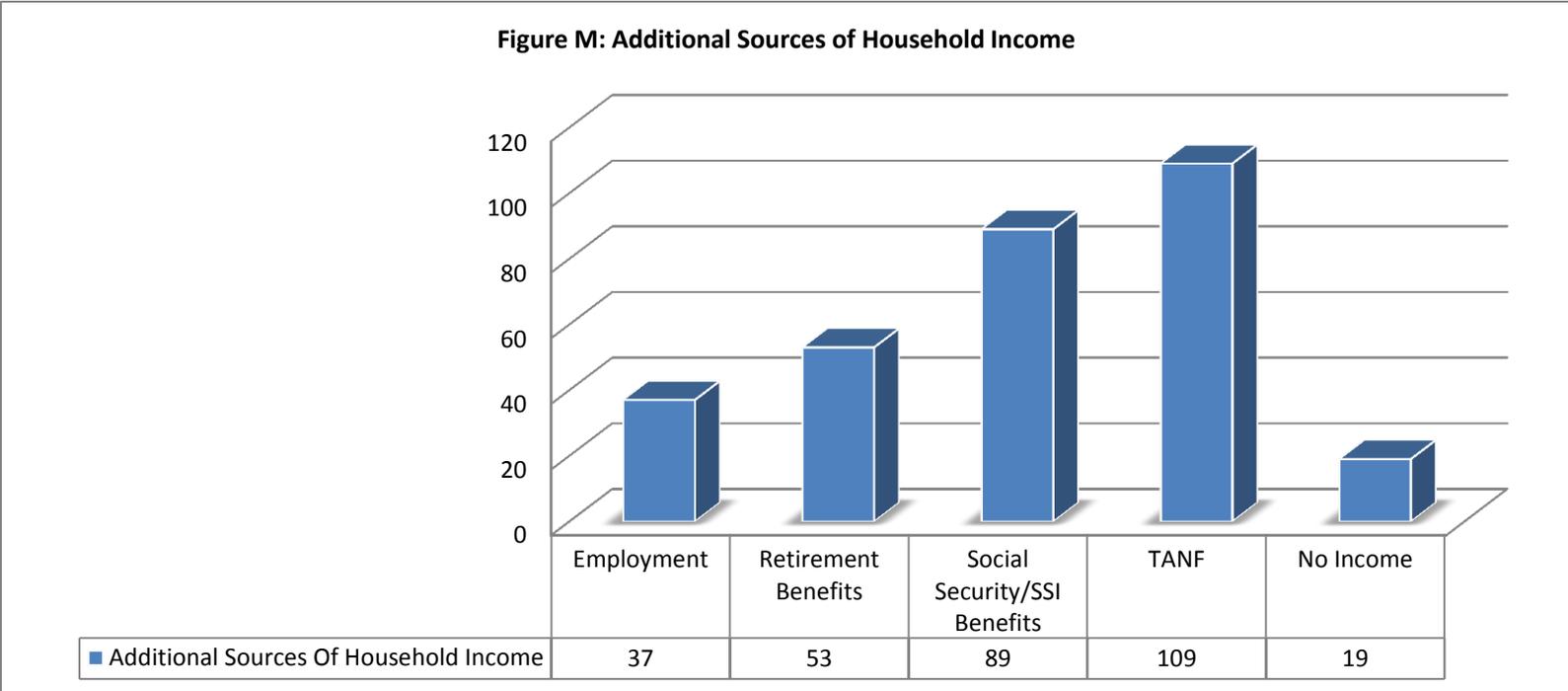
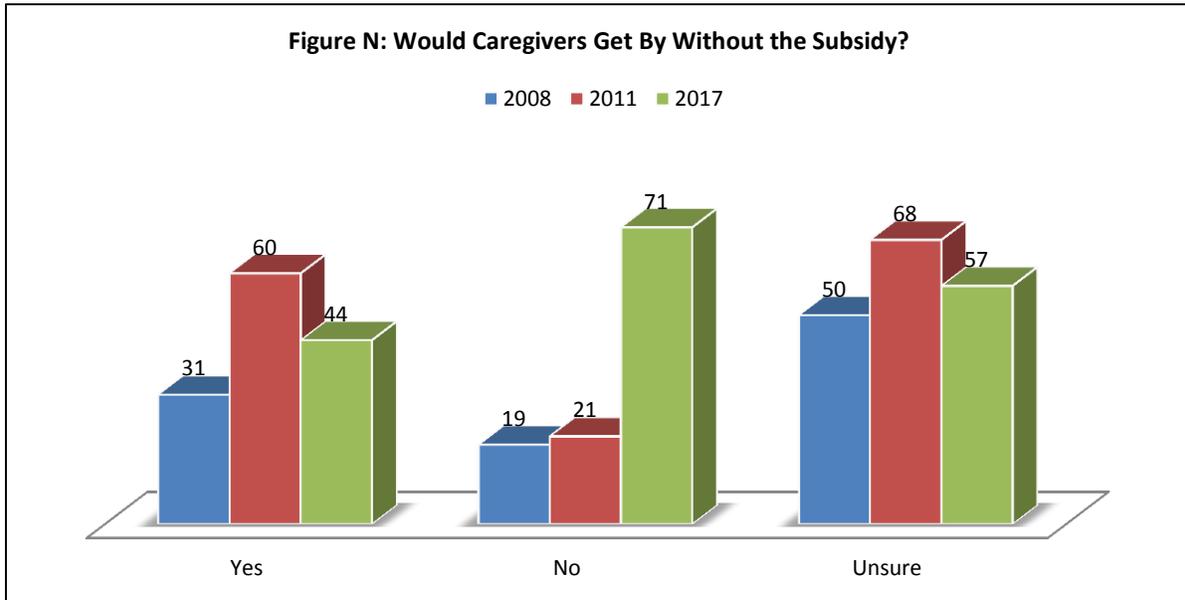


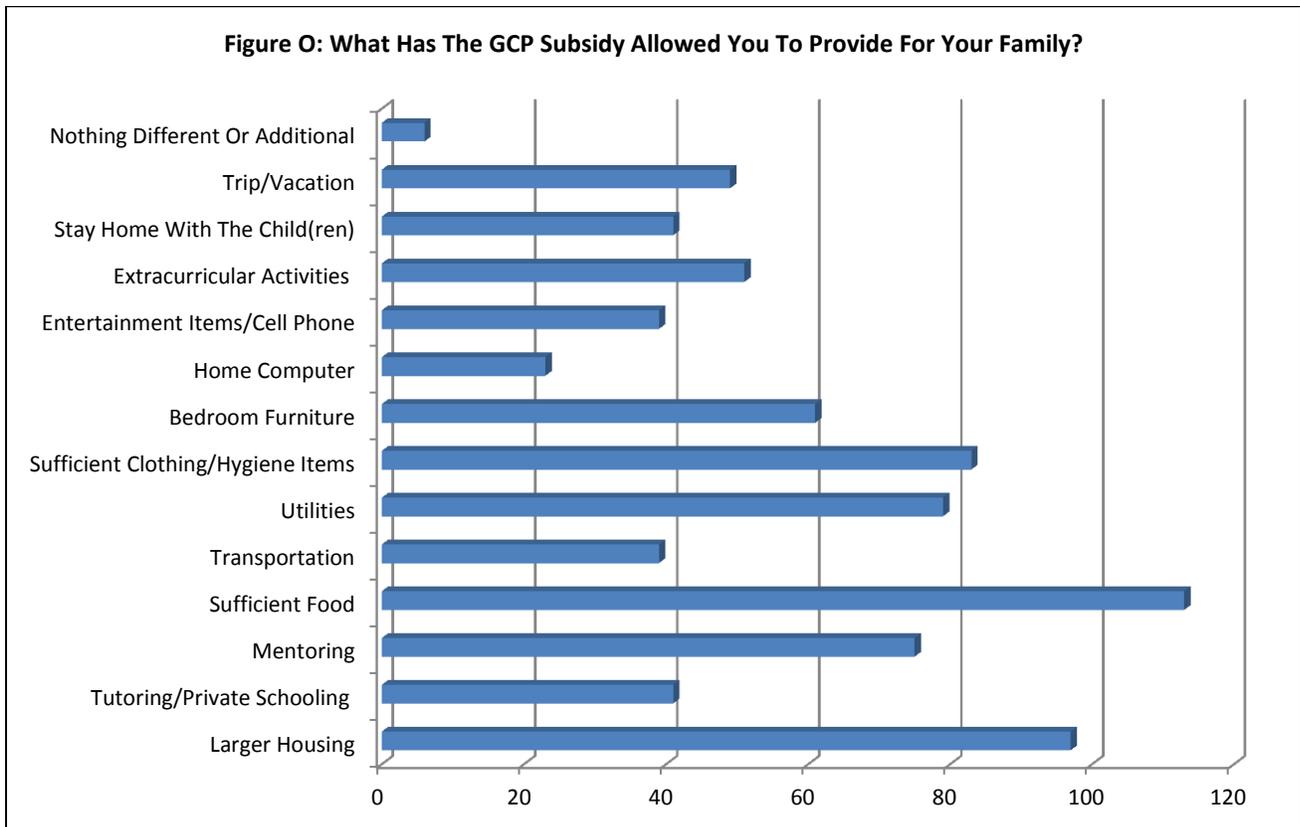
Figure M illustrates TANF benefits are a major source of income for GCP participants.



Based on the results of the survey, the majority of the caregivers depend on the subsidy program for assistance; otherwise, they would not be able to care for the children.



According to the survey, the subsidy allows GCP participants to afford necessities such as clothing, housing, and sufficient food.



As shown in Figure P, housing has been a major unaddressed need for the caregivers.

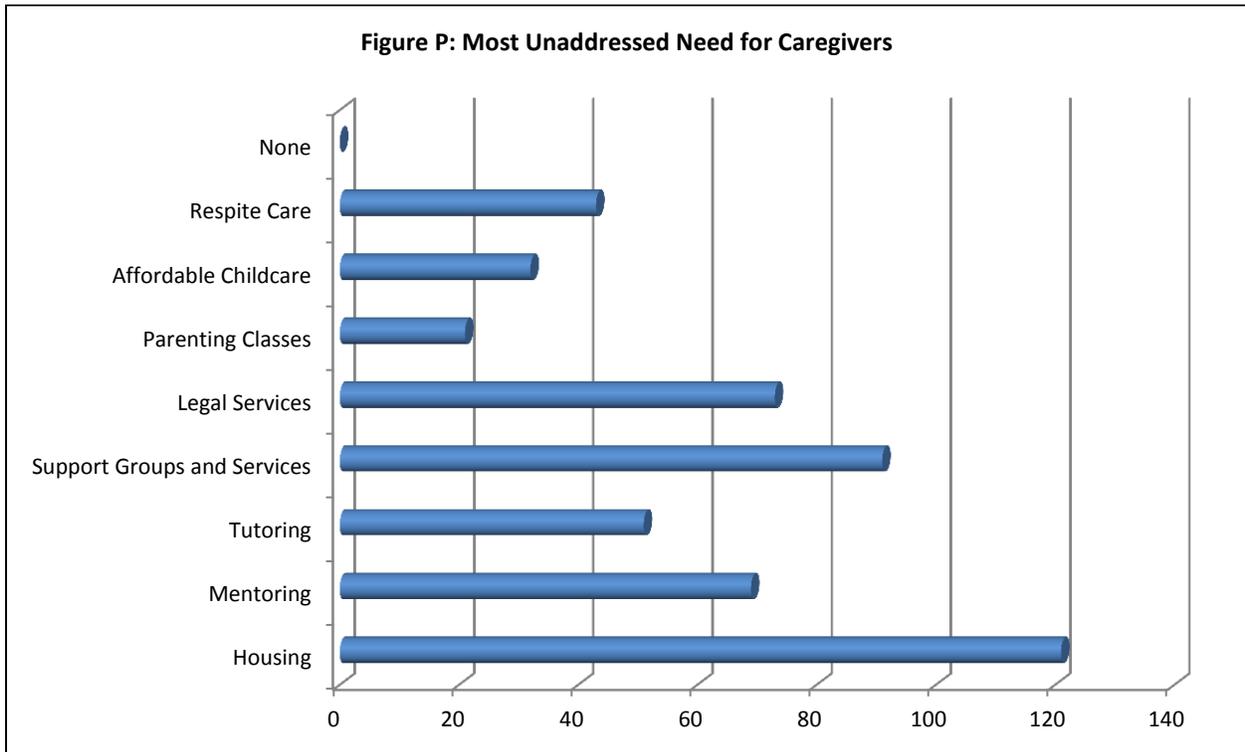
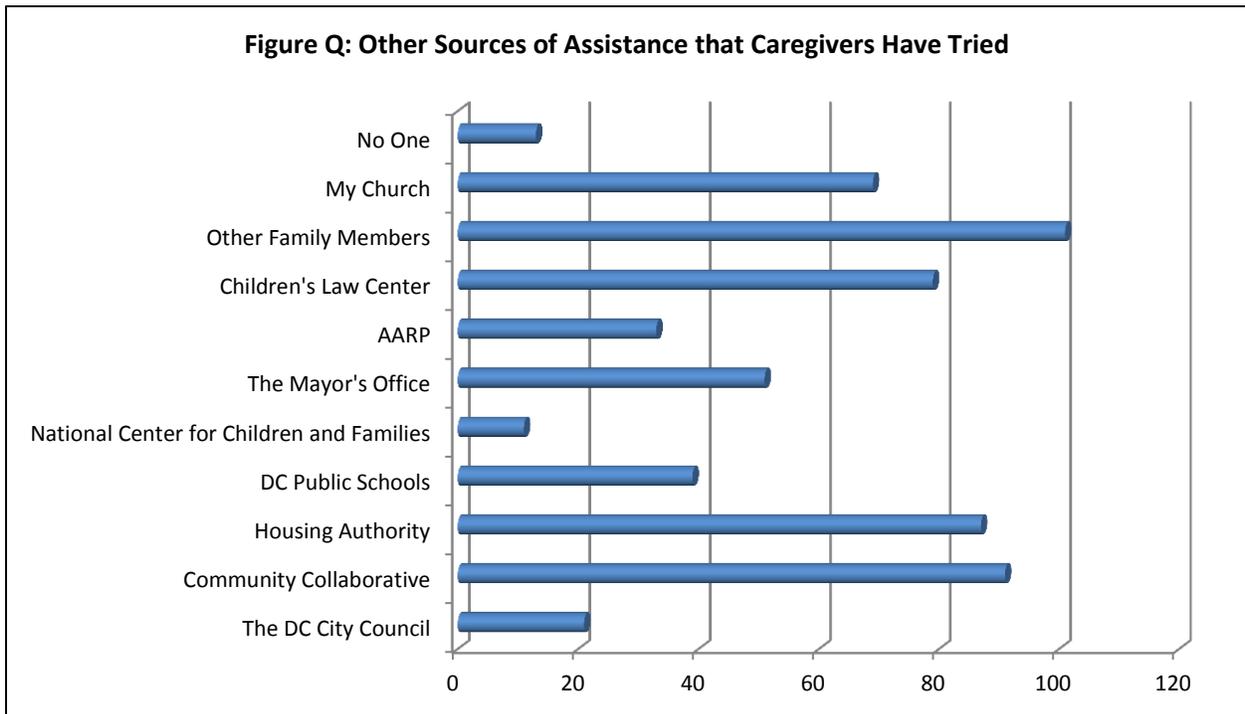


Figure Q shows that caregivers have accessed various other resources, including other family members and the Healthy Families/Thriving Communities Collaboratives.



In response to the survey results, GCP staff initiated referrals to the Collaboratives for additional services and resources. The team continually seeks new resources which might benefit participants in this program.

Chapter 4: GCP Population & Subsidy Overview

Table 3 includes various data points, such as the number of new applicants and children, the number of subsidy terminations, and the amount of subsidy paid monthly.

Statistics	Table 3: Grandparent Caregivers Monthly Data 2017												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	2017 Totals
New Applications	5	6	2	11	3	13	10	8	9	8	12	2	89
New Applications (# of Children)	12	11	15	12	9	16	18	15	11	10	15	7	151
# of Approved Applications	5	6	2	11	2	13	10	5	9	8	12	2	85
# of Children Approved	12	11	15	12	6	16	18	5	11	10	15	7	138
# of Denied Applications	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	4
# of Terminations	1	2	2	4	5	8	8	5	8	3	6	1	53
# of Age-outs	8	4	5	2	2	5	0	2	3	4	4	5	44
# of Appeals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
# Waitlisted Due To Funding	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Average Processing Time	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days	30 Days
# of Providers Receiving Subsidy	484	485	489	504	512	510	502	510	508	514	517	511	504 ¹⁵
# of Children Receiving Subsidy	738	738	738	768	785	778	765	775	771	784	790	785	768 ¹⁶
Total Subsidy Amount Paid	\$438,641.13	\$414,555.87	\$437,906.25	\$437,906.25	\$448,209.74	\$438,713.24	\$446,029.27	\$441,104.61	\$437,950.48	\$446,029.27	\$425,203.69	\$485,426.74	\$5,736,584.58

¹⁵Numbers based on a 12-month average.

¹⁶Numbers based on a 12-month average.

The Grandparent Caregiver Program continues to provide support to families in order to avoid entry into the foster care system. The majority of those caregivers who responded to the survey noted that they would not be able to care for their kin if it were not for the GCP subsidy. The increasing numbers of children and caregivers demonstrate this program is a significant part of the safety net which is building family and community resiliency and preventing entry into the child welfare system.